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Sara Teasdale

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SARA TEASDALE

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From a portrait by Eric Pape

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SARA TEASDALE

THROUGH her gift of understanding and interpretation, Sara Teasdale has won the admiration and gratitude of men and women in many lands. Since the publication of her first little book of lyrics twenty years ago, her audience has steadily grown and extends into many countries, for her poems have been translated into several languages.

In Sara Teasdale we find a purely American poet. She was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1884 of an old American family. Ancestors on both sides fought in the Revolution and one ancestor, Major Simon Willard, was founder of Concord, Massachusetts. About the middle of the nineteenth century both her maternal and paternal grandfathers followed the tide of migration to the Middle West. One became the owner of steamboats on the Mississippi and the other, true to his family tradition, a Baptist minister. From this background of Puritan and pioneer heritage emerged the poet who has voiced the inarticulate feelings of men and women everywhere.

The youngest of several children, and not strong, Sara Teasdale grew up as a shy, imaginative child. Once when asked when she first really enjoyed poetry she answered, "My mother like everybody else's mother, has incredible tales of my reciting every jingle in 'Mother Goose' at an infinitesimal age. But for the poetry that everyone would agree is worthy of being called so, Christina Rossetti's 'Christmas Carol,' was probably the first that I loved. I have included it in *RAINBOW GOLD*. It begins, 'In the bleak midwinter, frosty winds made moan.' I think I liked it better than other poems partly because snow is mentioned in it. I used to stand at the window during a snow-storm literally enchanted by the music of the lines."

Her early education was given at home. Later she attended a private school for girls in St. Louis. Her first attempts in

verse included translations from Heine and other German poets. Some of her earliest original verses were "very bad, indeed," she confesses, and says that one in which she rhymed "dusk" and "trust" haunts her to this day.

In 1903 she was graduated. She continued her writing and with several of her friends undertook the publication of a monthly magazine called "The Potter's Wheel." This unique publication was limited to one copy each month and was entirely in manuscript with original illustrations in photograph, black and white, and in color. Friends of the contributors showed much interest in the magazine which continued for several years.

Through all this time Sara Teasdale had been a systematic reader and one of her special treasures is a fat note-book in which, as a very little girl, she began to enter the titles of all the books she read through.

She has travelled widely in the United States and has spent several winters in California and the Southwest. Her first journey to Europe came in 1905. For some time she remained in Southern Europe and the near East, visiting Greece, Egypt and the Holy Land. During this period she was writing verse and upon her return in 1907 had her first recognition from the noted William Marion Reedy who published her blank verse monologue "Guenevere" in Reedy's *Mirror*. This same year her SONNETS TO DUSE AND OTHER POEMS was published by the Poet Lore Company of Boston. In England the famous critic, Arthur Symons, reviewing it for the *London Saturday Review*, wrote:

"In this little American book there is poetry, a voice singing to itself and to a great woman, a woman's homage to Eleanora Duse. The sonnets to Madame Duse are hardly the best part of the book, for they speak and the lyrics sing; but they speak with a reverence which is filled with both tenderness and just admiration.

"There are little songs for children, or about them, as lovely as these, and with a quaint humour of their own. The book is a

small, delightful thing, which one is not tempted to say much about, but to welcome."

By this time Sara Teasdale had entree into the leading magazines and her poems were welcomed by *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, *The Century* and others. In 1911 *HELEN OF TROY AND OTHER POEMS* was published. This brought abundant praise. It has remained a favorite and was recently reissued. In "The New Era in American Poetry," Louis Untermeyer says, "Helen of Troy, Beatrice, Sappho, Marianna Alcoforando (The Portuguese Nun), Guenevere, Erinna (pale Erinna of the perfect lyre; Sappho's favorite pupil)—these are all made to live in blank verse so musical that it has an almost lyric intensity. Classical in subject, the treatment is modern. The figures are vitalized by a new interpretation that is as penetrating as it is passionate."

In this volume we find Sara Teasdale entering the element in which she was to excel, for here are the first of her love songs which have become such universal favorites. Here are the widely quoted "Song for Colin," "Four Winds," and "The Kiss," with its closing quatrain:

For though I know he loves me
Tonight my heart is sad—
His kiss was not so wonderful
As all the dreams I had.

Even H. L. Mencken was moved to write of the book, "Poetry reduced to its elementals, and yet who will miss the genuine feeling in it, and the genuine beauty? It is the very simplicity of the thing, indeed, that gives it its charm."

The summer of 1912 the poet spent in Italy and Switzerland. It was there that "Vignettes Overseas," a group of lyrics in *RIVERS TO THE SEA*, was written.

In 1914 she married Mr. Ernst B. Filsinger. Mr. Filsinger, a well-known authority on international trade, is the author of

a number of books on this subject. Mr. and Mrs. Filsinger make their home in New York City.

RIVERS TO THE SEA, which contains many of her most haunting lyrics, was published in 1915. Here is evident a deepening of her emotional understanding. "The Look," "Gifts," "After Death," "The Answer" all show the poet's power to capture in a few lines the essence of an emotion. "Debt," one of the lyrics, is here quoted.

What do I owe to you
Who loved me deep and long?
You never gave my spirit wings
Or gave my heart a song.

But, oh, to him I loved
Who loved me not at all,
I owe the open gate
That led through heaven's wall.

"In this volume and the later ones we have the material for a rounded estimate of a poet whose songs give the woman's version of the human love-story, or at least as much of it as one of the finer, more sensitive, and protected women of our veiled and walled-in civilization may contribute to the whole vast epic of the race," says Harriet Monroe in her excellent book, "Poets and Their Art."

In 1917 a collection of her love lyrics was published under the title LOVE SONGS, and to it was awarded the Columbia University-Poetry Society of America Prize for the best book of poems published that year. The unusual popularity of this volume was proved by more than five editions in 1918 and the book has gone through many more since then.

The same year a fine collection of one hundred love lyrics written by women was made by Miss Teasdale and published under the title THE ANSWERING VOICE.

"Miss Teasdale has not taken away the joy of discovery by giving us only poems already belonging to us. We are the

richer by many lovely things unknown before. One wanders through the book with few disappointments and with an almost constant sense of charm and beauty," said *The Bookman*. Previously published by another house, the book was reissued by The Macmillan Company in 1926.

When *FLAME AND SHADOW* appeared in 1920 praise was bestowed on it from all sides. In this book the writer shows a maturing technique and both in thought and feeling covers a wider range than in her earlier volumes. "Here are new rhythms, far more subtle than those she has employed before; here are words chosen with a keener sense of their actual as well as their musical value; here the line moves with metrical inevitability. Radiance plays round these verses," wrote Louis Untermeyer in "American Poetry Since 1900."

Some of her most poignant poems are in this book, including "Let It Be Forgotten," considered by many her finest lyric.

Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,
Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold,
Let it be forgotten for ever and ever,
Time is a kind friend, he will make us old.

If anyone asks, say it was forgotten
Long and long ago,
As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall
In a long forgotten snow.

A beautiful edition of *FLAME AND SHADOW* was published in England in 1924 by Jonathan Cape. This was well reviewed by the critics as another section of this booklet shows. The *London Times* greeted the book and said in part—"FLAME AND SHADOW reveals her in the maturity of her powers. Because Sara Teasdale is a poet whose achievement lies rather in the perfect articulation of a mood than in any voyaging through strange seas in quest of universals, she gains everything by being presented to English readers at the moment when she has learnt exactly how to adopt her means to her end."

In 1922 her delightful anthology of the best poetry for boys and girls, *RAINBOW GOLD*, was published. This collection with its spirited decorations by Dugald Walker was hailed by critics, parents, and children alike. Here are eighty of the finest treasures of English and American verse with old and new poets represented.

"I should not have entered this field," said Miss Teasdale, "if I had not felt that there is a real need for a smaller book, with contents more rigourously chosen, than any I have seen. Such a book as *RAINBOW GOLD* is easier for the child to hold, and easier to become intimate with, than a large book. The intimacy which is most likely to instil a love of poetry as a whole, scarcely can be attained in a volume containing a great number of poems. Poetry is the most intimate of the arts. It should be the possession of the child by himself. A child should enjoy a poem just as he enjoys a ride in an automobile, without needing to understand the mechanism of the machine and without needing to know what was in the inventor's mind."

RAINBOW GOLD has found wide popularity since its publication. The Federation for Child Study has included it in a selected list of Books for Children.

Reviewing the book in *The New York Evening Post Literary Review*, Elinor Wylie said: "Sara Teasdale has turned the clock back a sufficient number of years and allowed her own childhood to decide for her under the wise but scrupulously restrained guidance of a woman of high poetic gifts and distinguished critical judgment. . . . I should not ask a better fate than to be a child to whom these most adorable toys, these pictures and trumpets and magic rings were given for the first time, unless it were to be that of the supremely lucky one, who, having long and painfully toiled to discover some part of the treasures among a number of heavy tomes and discouraging complexities of print, suddenly found himself the possessor of them all, bound up with many more in nice blue covers and shining clearly upon a page worthy of such delights."

The summer of 1923 the poet spent in England where she

has friends and many admirers of her poetry. In 1924 she went to France and here the "Pictures of Autumn" included in her next volume were written. Not until 1926 did that book appear, published in the autumn and called *DARK OF THE MOON*. Here may be found the qualities which one expects in her, but enriched by deeper thought and more varied music. Her work has shown a constant growth in artistry, with no loss of that lyric spontaneity, that exquisite and inherent gift of singing which has distinguished her from the start. The limited edition of this book was entirely sold before publication and the volume went through several large printings before the end of the year, being mentioned on lists of "best sellers." Excerpts from the many notable reviews of the book are included in another section of this booklet.

A very great number of Sara Teasdale's lyrics have been set to music. Among the composers who have made musical settings for her work are Amy M. Beach, Katherine Glen, Winter Watts, Mabel Wood Hill, and Rudolf Ganz. Her poems have been translated into many foreign languages. A volume of her lyrics, translated into German by Dr. Rudolf Rieder, is to be published shortly in Germany.

In 1926 M. Mijutani, a Japanese poet of distinction, translated and published in Japan a delightful volume of Miss Teasdale's poems. The book begins in oriental fashion at the back. Printed in vertical lines in the delicate Japanese characters, the poems seem like trailing wistaria. Other Japanese translations have been made by Yaso Saijiyou, considered by many people the foremost poet of Japan, and selections from *DARK OF THE MOON* have been translated by a young poet, Rikuso Watanabe.

Sara Teasdale tells her own method of composition in Marguerite Wilkinson's "The Way of the Makers," saying in part:

"My theory is that poems are written because of a state of emotional irritation. It may be present for some time before the

poet is conscious of what is tormenting him. The irritation springs, probably, from subconscious combinations of partly forgotten thoughts and feelings. Coming together, like electrical currents in a thunder storm, they produce a poem. A poem springs from emotions produced by an actual experience, or almost as forcefully, from those caused by an imaginary experience. In either case, the poem is written to free the poet from an emotional burden."

"Out of the fog of restlessness from which a poem springs, the basic idea emerges sometimes slowly, sometimes in a flash. This idea is known at once to be the light toward which the poet was groping. He now walks round and round it, so to speak, looking at it from all sides, trying to see which aspect of it is the most vivid. When he has hit upon what he believes is his peculiar angle of vision, the poem is fairly begun. The first line comes floating toward him with a charming definiteness of color and music. In my own case, the poems being brief, the rhythm usually follows in a general way, the rhythm of the first line. The more swiftly the poem forms itself, the better it is likely to be. This does not mean that a polishing process may not be long and sometimes disheartening."

"Brief lyrical poems are usually moulded in the poet's mind. They are far more fluid before they touch ink and paper than they ever are afterward. The warmth of the idea that generated the poem should vary the music and make the verses clear, ductile, a finished whole before they touch cold white paper. In the process of moulding his idea, the poet will be at white heat of intellectual and emotional activity, bearing in mind that every word, every syllable, must be an unobtrusive and yet an indispensable part of his creation. Every beat of his rhythm, the color of each word, the ring of each rhyme, must conform inevitably to his feeling. By shaping his poem with perfect exactitude to hold his emotion, he fulfills his subconscious aim in its composition. He sets himself free by pouring his thought into a form which holds it completely, and in which he can contemplate it as a thing apart from himself."

A fine edition of her four volumes, LOVE SONGS, RIVERS TO THE SEA, FLAME AND SHADOW, and DARK OF THE MOON has been issued. Bound in dark blue leather with gold titles, they are treasured sets in many collections.

The Bookman contains a brief pen picture of Sara Teasdale, and it is here quoted in part: "A quiet, gentle voiced lady with hair between red and gold is Sara Teasdale. She seldom seeks company, yet sees her friends often; her chief surprise for the acquaintance is her sudden sallies of droll and even biting wit. This one finds but unfrequently in her poems. . . . She is a woman of poise and a poet of great distinction. . . . A wise heart, vision, a sense of beauty in simple things; these are hers, and added to them an intellectual grasp of the technique of verse which gives her the ability to conceive in sentiment and execute in art."

SARA TEASDALE

By JESSIE B. RITTENHOUSE*

FROM the outset Sara Teasdale has been one who obeyed her own impulse, influenced not at all by changing fashions, but rather by changing experiences in a constantly deepening life. Her early books, *HELEN OF TROY*, *RIVERS TO THE SEA* and *LOVE SONGS*, were in the main the embodiment of the joy of a young poet in her first vivid contacts and realizations. To be sure, there were pensive songs and sad songs and songs of unrest, but these songs had at heart a curative joy, a healthy vitality. In them all there lurked an assurance, an inner conviction, which made them, whatever their mood, fundamentally positive and stimulating.

Indeed, as one rereads *RIVERS TO THE SEA*, the finest of Miss Teasdale's early volumes, and *LOVE SONGS*, one is instantly a thrall to that delight, that winged uplift, which true lyric poetry always gives. Even the slightest of the songs has this power to exhilarate which is the supreme test of poetry. This joy, this ecstasy of expression, must impel the poet before it can move the hearer; and Sara Teasdale's work is always born of this inner compulsion, hence its unfailing hold upon her readers.

That it is an unfailing hold is shown by the response to her new volume, *DARK OF THE MOON*, which comes after six years of silence to show how richly in the interval her art has been maturing.

It is a well entrenched theory that the creative years of a lyric poet, those which show new fecundity, rarely exceed a decade; that beyond this period he may sustain his poetic range but rarely transcend it. To this theory *DARK OF THE MOON*

*Reprinted with permission from *The Bookman*, May, 1927.

offers a strong refutation. In fact, between the poet of LOVE SONGS and DARK OF THE MOON so great a development is apparent as to show almost a new personality. All of the qualities of the earlier work are here, but tempered, enriched, remolded. The single theme has given place to the symphonic, wrought upon a basic note of "the still, sad music of humanity." Even in the most personal experience, interblended life utters its tone, so that one hears through the voice of the poet the many voices testifying of time and change, of love and death:

When, in the gold October dusk, I saw you near to
 setting,
 Arcturus, bringer of spring,
Lord of the summer nights, leaving us now in autumn,
 Having no pity on our withering;

Oh then I knew at last that my own autumn was upon
 me,
 I felt it in my blood,
Restless as dwindling streams that still remember
 The music of their flood.

There in the thickening dark a wind-bent tree above me
 Loosed its last leaves in flight—
I saw you sink and vanish, pitiless Arcturus,
 You will not stay to share our lengthening night.

This poem, so magical in its brooding music, delaying in its very notes as one delays who contemplates the thing that is inevitable and yet arrested—is the work of a poet still young, as time is counted, of one whose autumn is yet distant but who feels the prescience of change and withdrawal as Masfield felt it when, though hardly at his prime, he wrote the exquisite lines:

Be near me, Beauty, for the fire is dying.

It is the mood of Shelley when, yet in his twenties, he lamented,

If I were even as in my youth

and invoked the west wind as "destroyer and preserver." Just in proportion to the keenness of the passion with which a poet has felt life will be his instinctive apprehension that the waning of the passion is at hand, and among the poets of our day none is keener in feeling, more emotionally sensitive, than Sara Teasdale.

It is not love alone that calls forth in her a response so swift and compelling, but the inalienable joy of beauty, the one thing that survives though love fail and dynasties crumble. Those who read her aright will be moved by the elation of beauty, the love that is a primary passion, older than that which seeks its response in the human. Going back to the earliest songs one finds it beating in their music:

I went out on an April morning
All alone, for my heart was high,
I was a child of the shining meadow,
I was a sister of the sky.

There in the windy flood of morning,
Longing lifted its weight from me,
Lost as a sob in the midst of cheering,
Swept as a sea-bird out to sea.

This is a lyric taken at random but how strong its pulses run, how it surges with the joy of living! Rarely does Sara Teasdale write a poem, whatever its theme, but it has an inner theme, the reaching out for more of beauty, the longing for greater absorption in all the loveliness of earth:

I cannot die, who drank delight
From the cup of the crescent moon,
And hungrily as men eat bread,
Loved the scented nights of June.

The rest may die—but is there not
Some shining strange escape for me
Who sought in Beauty the bright wine
Of immortality?

Even when her specific theme is love, within it is that deeper love that has never yet been satiated.

To me, this quality in Sara Teasdale's work is all important; that joy is always quick at its heart; that eagerness of living, or understanding, even of suffering, beats so insistently in it. It is this which lifts even the songs in a minor key into the major harmony of poetry. The poet must not only accept, he must invite the thrust of pain, knowing that he is sheathed in love and invulnerable through beauty. When one reads Sara Teasdale's poetry, even though the song be sad, one is conscious of that inner valor, that affirmation, which confirms his own faith and says "Yea" to life. The poet who has resolved life into its meaning will find that all its notes blend to a rich diapason. It is a music not to be compassed by one singer, but each one, to whatever degree he approaches it, is lifted into rapture. It is in this sense that "the song is to the singer and comes back most to him," returning in the enrichment of joy.

Each poet has his way of approach to the realization of life, and with Sara Teasdale it has been largely through love. Perhaps the psychology of love and its evolution could not be traced more subtly than through her successive volumes. To generalize is misleading, since there is always the exception that seems to refute the premise, but in the main one will find the volumes up to the appearance of *FLAME AND SHADOW* to have been the demand of life for its fulfilment in love. In the earliest verse this demand overshadows all others; it is the urge of youth for its destiny and inspires in Sara Teasdale some of the most exquisite and impassioned of her songs. How one would like to quote them to show how perfectly the emotion creates its expression, how every word falls true! It is interesting also to note that while these poems have the transport, the "fine ex-

cess," of poetry, they have the instinctive restraint which holds it true to art. A lyric, if perfect, is conceived and created simultaneously. It can never be added to nor taken from. It has at once the quality of inevitability and the illusion of improvisation. Particularly is this true of the work of Sara Teasdale in her most lyrical period. Whatever the theme, its expression seems to leap into being with it and one feels that it could not have come otherwise. Just as the earlier songs voice the urge of youth for its destiny, so they lament, as youth must lament, that it is withheld. Upon this theme turn some of the loveliest of Miss Teasdale's lyrics, some of those most likely to sing on in the future, as her well known lines:

When I am dead and over me bright April
Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
Though you should lean above me broken-hearted
I shall not care.

I shall have peace as leafy trees are peaceful
When rain bends down the bough,
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted
Than you are now.

Could any mood be truer to youth than that?

It would require a much more exact and delicate tracing than is possible in so brief a space as this to show how these moods of desire and reaction merge into the larger significance of love. Their foretokens are apparent in *RIVERS TO THE SEA*, and *LOVE SONGS*, and in *FLAME AND SHADOW* they show a progressive deepening, an increasing absorption of the personal in the universal; but it is in *DARK OF THE MOON* that they reach the finality of vision.

Neither in *FLAME AND SHADOW* nor in *DARK OF THE MOON* is love the paramount theme, but where it is the theme, so richly is it fused with all that maturer life brings as to make a complete unity of experience. One theme may be the lens

through which one focuses the whole of life. Most of us have one spiritual preoccupation, one avenue of vision through which we comprehend what is given us to comprehend of eternity. With Sara Teasdale, if love has been the lens it has swept in a wide arc, an arc which subtends the whole of the circle.

Starting with the joyous certitude of "The Sussex Downs" and "August Night," keen with the zest of living, *DARK OF THE MOON* passes through many phases:

There will be stars over the place forever;
 Though the house we loved and the street we loved
 are lost,
Every time the earth circles her orbit,
 On the night the autumn equinox is crossed,
Two stars we knew, poised on the peak of midnight,
 Will reach their zenith; stillness will be deep;
There will be stars over the place forever,
 There will be stars forever, while we sleep.

Exquisite in its restraint and its artistry, with its music wedded to the mood, this poem is typical of the later beauty of Sara Teasdale's work, a beauty if less obviously lyrical, perhaps finer and more enduring. There is no loss of emotion, because it is tempered by knowledge and evoked by deeper delight. The time has come to brood upon fruitions, to let go the unrealized, to readjust the dream until it embraces with complete acceptance even death.

It would be misleading to overemphasize the contemplative note in *DARK OF THE MOON*, since it is relieved so frequently by lighter notes, but when all is said, the finest lyric poetry comes from the deeps of life. The poet is reaching out for spiritual fulfilment, just as the poet of youth reaches out for physical fulfilment. Both are needed to make a balanced and beautiful body of poetry, and both have had their full expression in the work of Sara Teasdale. Beauty is never sacrificed in either, and the increasingly subtle and refined artistry, the

richer music, with its nuances, which one finds in *DARK OF THE MOON*, is achieved at no loss of the moving quality which has animated Miss Teasdale's verse from the beginning.

It may be noted also that in a period when technique has been the preoccupation of the poets, when they have gone to any length to be "different," with a mistaken idea of individualizing themselves through the strained and bizarre, Sara Teasdale has held true to the lyric norm. to simplicity, sincerity, and emotion, not thinking to hold true but doing it unconsciously as the poet does who is possessed by his genius. There has crept into poetry of late a strain of cleverness, an affectation of cynicism. Some of the finest of the lyric poets, as far as accomplishment goes, obviously write with an eye to capturing an audience by their smartness; but did these poets ever stop to think that the immortal lyrics are not clever? There is nothing clever in

Old, unhappy, far-off things;

nothing clever in

I could not love thee, dear, so much

Loved I not honour more;

nothing clever in

I would I were where Helen lies,

Night and day on me she cries!

Poetry is so in earnest as to forget itself. The poet speaks to his own heart, and just in proportion as he makes his own heart his audience does the world listen. So out of every generation, out of the voluminous singing, comes the small residue of poetry. With this residue, one may well believe, will be found the winnowed songs of Sara Teasdale, those which carry at once the magic and the passion of poetry. For Miss Teasdale

has inherently that most precious of all poetic gifts, magic, as her unforgettable lyric, "August Night," attests:

On a midsummer night, on a night that was eerie
with stars,

In a wood too deep for a single star to look through,
You led down a path whose turnings you knew in the
darkness,

But the scent of the dew-dripping cedars was all
that I knew.

I drank of the darkness, I was fed with the honey of
fragrance,

I was glad of my life, the drawing of breath was
sweet;

I heard your voice, you said, "Look down, see the
glow-worm!"

It was there before me, a small star white at my feet.

We watched while it brightened as though it were
breathed on and burning,

This tiny creature moving over earth's floor—

"*L'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle,*"

You said, and no more.



SARA TEASDALE

*From a photograph by
Nickolas Muray*

COMMENTS OF THE CRITICS



On the following pages
are excerpts from reviews
of Sara Teasdale's Books

DARK OF THE MOON

SARA TEASDALE'S earlier lyrics—in *RIVERS TO THE SEA* and *LOVE SONGS*—are delightfully spontaneous and simple outpourings of emotion. They are not only true lyrics, but they are songs of youth, which is supposed to be the proper time for singing.

But of the poems in her later volumes—*FLAME AND SHADOW* and now *DARK OF THE MOON*—while they are naturally less youthful in spirit, are quite as spontaneously lyric; and they show, moreover, undeniable growth in the art. The poet's technique becomes much more subtle and varied; her choice of words more exact and distinguished, and her rhythms more delicately harmonized. One gets an effect of increasing richness in both thought and artistry.

One is arrested in almost every poem by some telling phrase or other finely wrought detail. In "August Night" "dew-dripping cedars" gives a picture in word-music. "At Tintagil" carries a tricky rhythm with grace. "Autumn" slopes to its end with long slow curves of sound. And this one, "Beautiful Proud Sea," is very rightly said, and with extreme compactness.

Careless forever, beautiful proud sea,
You laugh in happy thunder all alone,
You fold upon yourself, you dance your dance
Impartially on drift-weed, sand or stone.

You make us believe that we can outlive death,
You make us for an instant, for your sake,
Burn, like stretched silver of a wave,
Not breaking, but about to break.

One might go on thus through the book, pointing out special felicities. "Effigy of a Nun," whose seven quatrains form the

longest poem in the book, has a quiet falling rhythm and close-wrought phrasing, leading persuasively to its final aphorism.

How empty wisdom is, even to the wise.

In "Clear Evening" one likes "new-cut-stars" and the tautness of the final stanza. And "Not by the Sea" begins thus, the slow-moving third and fourth lines being especially good:

Not by the sea, but somewhere in the hills,
Not by the sea, but in the uplands surely
There must be rest where a dim pool demurely
Watches all night the stern slow-moving skies.

Two of the nine sections into which this book is divided become intimately confessional—one, "The Flight," being a tribute to the poet's husband, to whom all her books since marriage have been dedicated; and the other, "The Crystal Gazer," offering with impassioned intensity her philosophy of life. Always these confessions have the firmly chiselled austerity of complete conviction. One finds neither doubt nor questioning in her feeling for the beloved or for the meaning of life: in the one case, if not ecstasy, a clear serenity of happiness; in the other, a brave facing of the unknown immensities of fate.

The beautiful initial poem of the "Flight" series will suggest the tone and temper of all:

It is enough of honor for one lifetime
To have known you better than the rest have
known,
The shadows and the colors of your voice,
Your will, immutable and still as stone.

The shy heart, so lonely and so gay,
The sad laughter and the pride of pride,
The tenderness, the depth of tenderness
Rich as the earth, and wide as heaven is wide.

In earlier books, especially *FLAME AND SHADOW*, we have had hints of this poet's rather stark philosophy, her courageous outlook upon the mystery of life and death; but here we find a more mature expression of her thinking. Perhaps it is most clearly summed up in "The Solitary," which stresses the inviolateness, the essential aloofness, of the human soul:

My heart has grown rich with the passing of
years,
I have less need now than when I was young
To share myself with every comer,
Or shape my thoughts into words with my
tongue.

It is one to me that they come or go
If I have myself and the drive of my will,
And strength to climb on a summer night
And watch the stars swarm over the hill.

Let them think I love them more than I do,
Let them think I care, though I go alone,
If it lifts their pride what is it to me
Who am self-complete as a flower or a stone.

DARK OF THE MOON, like its predecessors, has a personality in it. And when a powerful and engaging personality finds a truly lyric expression with the completeness recorded in successive groups of Sara Teasdale's best poems, we have a seemingly indestructible combination, a prophecy of what we short-sighted and short-lived mortals call immortality.

HARRIET MONROE, in *Poetry*.

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SARA TEASDALE'S sole collection of verse since 1920 is surely an event. And it is a small collection at that, but a varied one—for an author who has always been subjected to that subtly deprecating description, "a singer of one mood"—descrip-

tion, by the way, which is seldom true. However, Miss Teasdale's is emphatically the singer of one personality. Since her two earliest books she has never sought for "subjects," but has sung consistently herself and her spiritual adventure—which is love. And—lured to comparisons with her earlier work by the publisher's remark that this is "a book of deeper import, of wider contacts with living, than her earlier work"—one is struck not so much by that (for what it amounts to is that Miss Teasdale is not standing still), but by the continuity and consistency of her growth, that it has been continuous and not a mere metamorphosis. . . . In the present book Miss Teasdale does reveal new facets of her personality, one of them being a strength not only to face the universe (which she does not romanticize nor strive to bring nearer to the heart's preconceptions), but a strength to face solitude.

LLEWELLYN JONES, in *The Chicago Evening Post*.

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SARA TEASDALE's most formidable rival is herself. From the appearance of her SONNETS TO DUSE in 1907, hers was a triumphal progress through HELEN OF TROY—Homer's Helen, not Professor Erskine's—and RIVERS TO THE SEA till that first decade culminated in "Love Songs" with the public recognition of the Columbia University prize. But the volume of 1920, FLAME AND SHADOW, so far excels them all that, after these six waiting years, we hardly dare ask if the new volume registers a still higher attainment.

The earlier qualities are here in undiminished charm—the artistry, the magic, the directness of utterance bearing out her own testimony: "I try to say what moves me. I never care to surprise my reader." Our surprise comes in finding our own feeling so exquisitely spoken.

—KATHARINE LEE BATES, in *The New York Evening Post*.

* * * *

WHEN FLAME AND SHADOW was published, many of us thought that Sara Teasdale would hardly surpass it in her

next volume. Yet in *DARK OF THE MOON*, perhaps, she is more truly herself than ever she was before. Her esthetic doctrine of unflinching loyalty to the truth "as it is felt" has taught her how to give her times lyrics which, even when they are saddest, have an ennobling clarity and sincerity, because they never veil or evade the hurt and hardness of life. Wherefore, as of old, she finds more joy in sorrow than most of us ever find in joy. And her music—let glib theorists about meters be silent and listen!

MARGUERITE WILKINSON, in *The International Book Review*.

* * * *

SARA TEASDALE's authentic gift has been accented with the years. Her new collection of poems, *DARK OF THE MOON*, captures the senses and the heart. These lyrics are deeper with meaning than many of her earlier songs. They are like a still stream of love, after a rushing torrent sometimes too cluttered with blossoms from the mountain bushes. Now her poems have a clearness, an always crystal beauty. They have lost none of their appeal, they have only gained in that austerity which seems to me to mark the really great in poetry.

JOHN FARRAR, in *The Bookman*.

* * * *

FLAME AND SHADOW

*H*ERE is another steel-strong, defiant intellect, answering the riddle of the universe with song. It is not enough to say that Sara Teasdale has grown intellectually since the publication of her earlier books and that in thought and feeling *FLAME AND SHADOW* is the finest of them all. We must, perforce, acknowledge a growth in artistry. This is a book to read with reverence and joy. Although I seldom prophesy, I venture to say that it will have a long life.

MARGUERITE WILKINSON, in *The New York Times*.

SOME of her verses have about them what may best be described as an inevitable beauty. It seems as if they had always been written; as if they were a necessary part of the scheme of things entire. Miss Teasdale's glowing reputation will gain an added beauty by this volume.

ELIA W. PEATTIE, in *The Chicago Tribune*.

SARA TEASDALE . . . sustains without flagging the true song-lyric; and it gives her a fine distinction.

STUART P. SHERMAN, in *The Yale Review*.

HER images are perfect. . . . The beauty that Sara Teasdale is in quest of may be discovered on every page of her poems.

BABETTE DEUTSCH, in *The New York Evening Post*.

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LOVE SONGS

SARA TEASDALE has won her way to the front rank of living American poets. Her career is beginning, but her work shows a combination of strength and grace that many a master might envy.

WILLIAM LYON PHELPS, in "*The Advance of Poetry in the Twentieth Century*."

THIS SINGER does not know how to be affected. The sincerity of her poems, their clearness and their intellectual level are related to a fine courage that is always present. It is delightful to get a book of poems that have come out of the heart.—

PADRIAC COLUM, in *The New Republic*.

FEW American (or, for that matter, English) poets have attained an equal clarity and distinctive grace.

LEE WILSON DODD, in *The Yale Review*.

SARA TEASDALE's lyrics will far outlast this period and become part of that legacy of pure song which one age leaves to another.

The New York Times.

RIVERS TO THE SEA

SARA TEASDALE stands high among the living poets of America. In *RIVERS TO THE SEA* there is a rare combination of fervor with a high, serene discretion, a poised and steadfast art.

O. W. FIRKINS, in *The Nation*.

RIVERS TO THE SEA is the best book of pure lyrics that has appeared in English since A. E. Housman's "A Shropshire Lad."

WILLIAM MARION REEDY, in *The Mirror*.

THE genuineness of Sara Teasdale's simple lyrics is proved by the fact that we become infected by and share the emotions she communicates in *RIVERS TO THE SEA*. Her form seems to be born of her feeling.

EDWARD GARNETT, in *The Atlantic Monthly*.

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HELEN OF TROY AND OTHER POEMS

SARA TEASDALE, as a maker of poignantly perfect songs of simplicity and of love, outranks all other American poets.

ORRICK JOHNS, in *The St. Louis Mirror*.

ONE WONDERS, is it the voice of the New Woman, or of the Old Woman, or of Woman Immemorial? In any case, it has the authentic accent of genius. It is not too high praise to say that there is sufficient poetry in this small book to furnish forth a hundred volumes of the ordinary variety. . . . Not since the day of Elizabeth Barrett Browning has any woman distilled a stronger essence of femininity into her verse.

HELEN BULLIS, in *The New York Times*.

RAINBOW GOLD

Poems Old and New Selected for Boys and Girls

HERE we feel that the joyous discrimination of a poet is shown; for these poems are so adapted to youthful moods that the phlegmatic as well as the fanciful child, the boy as well as the girl, can delight in them. Heroic lyrics, old ballads, bits of fairy legend, and songs, plaintive and gentle as a nurses's lullabies, are a vital part of a child's growing years. The simple, the noble, the fiery things, are stuff of his thought—for children's emotions are as lightly stirred as reeds by a dragon fly. . . . The author has shown fine insight. . . . And the effect of the poems is heightened by the vigor and magic of Dugald Walker's illustrations. . . . Today Malory and Spenser, Scott, Dickens, and the old poets are refurbished for the young; instead of children turning in at the old gate to seek the real beauty and thought that lies beyond them. Well, here at last, are swift, bright paths leading to those gates, and clear trumpets blowing to herald the traveler.

LAURA BENÉT, in *The Christian Science Monitor*.

RAINBOW GOLD is a book of treasure-verse. It begins with that incomparable fragment by Coleridge, "Kubla Khan," and ends with "Auld Daddy Darkness," by James Ferguson. Between the two lies a wonder-world of imagery, lyrics, songs, and Dithyramb . . . I believe, with Miss Teasdale, that the most important thing in the education of children is to stimulate their imagination and senses.

BENJAMIN DE CASSERES, in *Arts and Decoration*.

Sara Teasdale's RAINBOW GOLD is a small and exceedingly well-chosen selection of poems for children of over, rather than under, ten years. The decorative illustrations are by Dugald Walker and the introduction by the compiler is a direct invitation to read poetry for its own sake.

ANNE CARROLL MOORE, in *The Bookman*.

THE ANSWERING VOICE

One Hundred Love Lyrics by Women

A LUSTROUS exhibit of English poetry.

Boston Herald.

SARA TEASDALE'S collection throws a new light on the way women can love. It will be popular with all admirers of fine verse.

Philadelphia Public Ledger.

SARA TEASDALE was better fitted to carry out the idea than any other woman in America. . . . Her greatest service by virtue of her original ability is in purging the poems of sentimentality, presenting only the pure gold.

WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE,
in *The Boston Transcript.*

WHAT ENGLAND SAYS

THERE is no "sweet lavender" about Miss Sara Teasdale. Hers is a spirit solitary and imperious, and the calm of certain of her poems has nothing to do with patience and the harvesting of memories.

It is disciplined, controlled—a prelude to a tumult—

The stretched silver of a wave
Not breaking, but about to break.

Her sense of beauty, like her capacity for feeling, is bright as a sword and has the sword's keen edge. Her "frosty and half ironic musings" perceive a snake in a summer wood, a snail's track by a moonlit sea.

And she has an ear so delicate that tunes played to her by falling water, by damp leaves, by Iseult, by her own heart, are exactly caught and surely rendered again in exquisite, shifting rhythms. To choose for quotation is harder than picking one daisy from a spring meadow—but "The Tune" is a subtle thing in mood and motion—and like her:—

I know a certain tune that my life plays;
Over and over I have heard it start
With all the wavering loveliness of violets
And gain in swiftiness like a runner's heart.

It climbs and climbs; I watch it sway in climbing
High over time, high even over doubt,
It has all Heaven to itself—it pauses
And faltering blindly down the air, goes out.

ON DARK OF THE MOON, from *London Observer*.

THE TIDE of realism, colloquialism, and anarchism which Whitman set in motion has left her as untouched as the austere manifestos of the "Imagists." And this is due, we think, to her intensely personal preoccupation. The pure poet seldom goes out in search of new doctrines or flings himself into emancipating movements. Absorbed in an inner prospect, he is glad to accept a traditional technique, so that he may concentrate all his energies on shaping it precisely to his needs and on defining in the process what the needs of his emotional nature are.

Many poems in *FLAME AND SHADOW* testify to Sara Teasdale's conviction that

The one unchanging thing is I,

and all of them prove her loyalty to that unique reality which is herself.

The London Times.

* * * *

IT IS A RARE thing for a poet to surrender wholly to egocentricity without sacrificing some measure of distinction. Yet Miss Teasdale has done that. Hers is the most concentrated expression of personality in American lyricism. "The one unchanging thing is I," she wrote in one of her earlier poems, and she is of the same conviction in her latest.

It is because of the extreme simplicity of her emotional contents that her introspection does not lower her quality, as with most poets, though it limits her creative scope. Her world is the evening sky with one lone star—and she is that star. Star unto star uttereth speech—and so she communes with herself. But she does it with such intensity and distilled naturalness that for the moment the personal seems to have put on universality. She is not star-crossed, she is star-compelled; that is to say, it is herself that controls her course. Her rhythm has the flow of finality. It is indeed herself that sings in her; it is "star-song at night." It governs her imagery, which is sparse but beautiful.

C. P., in *The Manchester Guardian*.

"THERE IS BUT one thing certain," says Pliny, with his curious mixture of matter-of-fact and melancholy, "that nothing is certain; and there is nothing more wretched or more proud than man." Human unhappiness and the pride that half causes it and half redeems—of the union of these two eternal contrasts FLAME AND SHADOW is made. It is the utterance of a mood which all feel sometimes, some always; which all the generations have repeated, yet each of them yearns to hear expressed anew in the special accents of its own day—that particular kind of pessimism which feels the vanity, and yet the value, of life. And it needs to be restated still. For the present cannot live on the past, on dead men's words, alone; its own literature may be inferior, much of it must be, inevitably, minor; yet, as Homer had already learnt, men love the song which is new, and a living voice has in some ways an appeal that no dead eloquence can bring. This is the value of FLAME AND SHADOW; not that it contains new ideas, but that a view of life which our age in part accepts, in part struggles to avoid, is here once more expressed with sincerity and skill—the feeling that for all the agony of transience, all the disillusion of hopes in vain fulfilled, there are no consolations, but the bitter beauty of the Universe, and the frail human pride that confronts it, for a moment, undismayed.

From *Authors Dead and Living*, by F. L. LUCAS.

"EVERYTHING Miss Teasdale writes is brief and simple . . . she has something to say and says it charmingly and touchingly with a complete absence of any effort to attract attention."—

J. C. SQUIRE, in *The London Mercury*.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF BOOKS BY SARA TEASDALE

SONNETS TO DUSE, AND OTHER POEMS (out of print)	1907
HELEN OF TROY, AND OTHER POEMS	1911
New Edition with changes and revisions—1922	
RIVERS TO THE SEA	1915
LOVE SONGS	1917
THE ANSWERING VOICE	1917
An Anthology of Love Lyrics by Women	
New Edition 1926	
FLAME AND SHADOW	1920
English Edition	1924
RAINBOW GOLD	1922
Poems Old and New. Selected for Boys and Girls.	
DARK OF THE MOON	1926



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60 Fifth Avenue, New York

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